

The National Citizen Survey™

Estes Park, CO

Community Livability Report

2014

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The National Citizen Survey™
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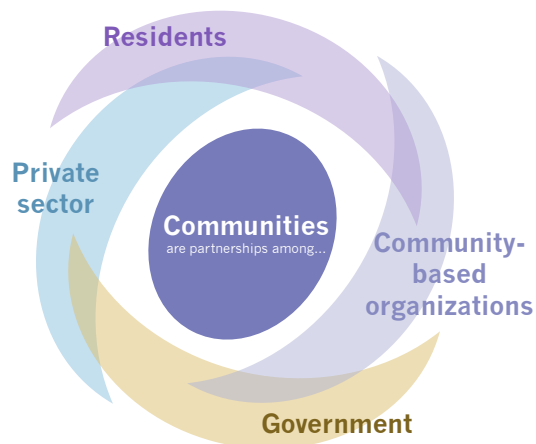
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About

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) report is about the “livability” of Estes Park. The phrase “livable community” is used here to evoke a place that is not simply habitable, but that is desirable. It is not only where people do live, but where they want to live.

Great communities are partnerships of the government, private sector, community-based organizations and residents, all geographically connected. The NCS captures residents’ opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central facets of community (Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement).

The Community Livability Report provides the opinions of a representative sample of 558 residents of the Town of Estes Park. The margin of error around any reported percentage is 4% for the entire sample. The full description of methods used to garner these opinions can be found in the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover.

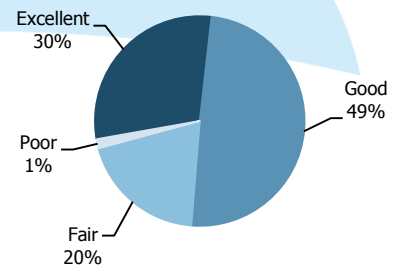


Quality of Life in Estes Park

Most residents rated the quality of life in Estes Park as excellent or good. This rating was similar to the benchmark comparison (see Appendix B of the *Technical Appendices* provided under separate cover).

Shown below are the eight facets of community. The color of each community facet summarizes how residents rated it across the three sections of the survey that represent the pillars of a community – Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation. When most ratings across the three pillars were higher than the benchmark, the color for that facet is the darkest shade; when most ratings were lower than the benchmark, the color is the lightest shade. A mix of ratings (higher and lower than the benchmark) results in a color between the extremes.

Overall Quality of Life



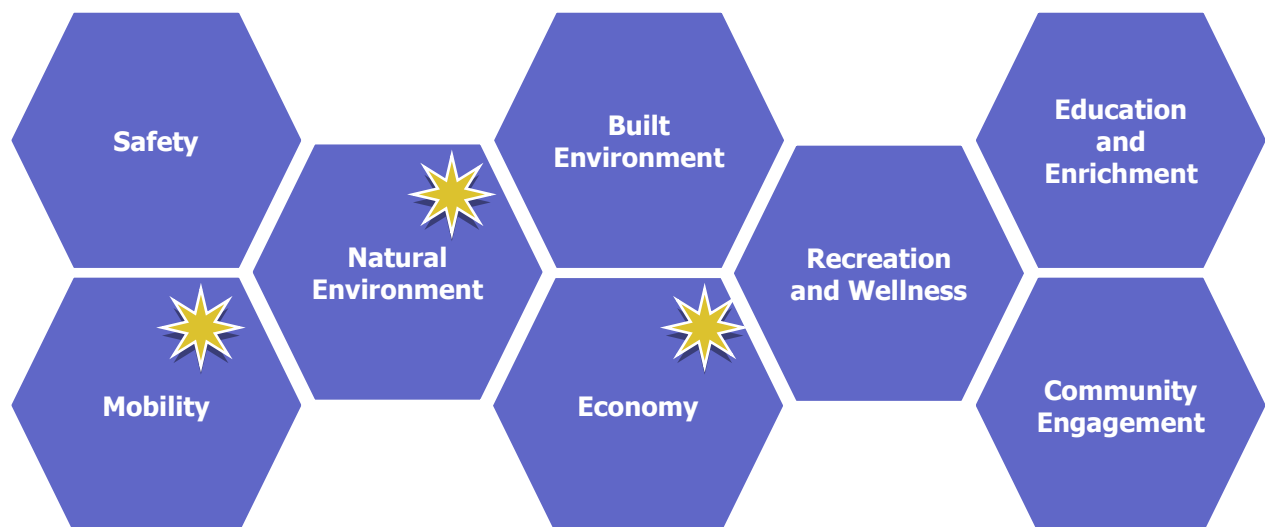
In addition to a summary of ratings, the image below includes one or more stars to indicate which community facets were the most important focus areas for the community. Residents identified Economy, Mobility and Natural Environment as priorities for the Estes Park community in the coming two years. It is noteworthy that Estes Park residents gave favorable ratings to all of these facets of community. Ratings for all eight facets were positive and similar to other communities. This overview of the key aspects of community quality provides a quick summary of where residents see exceptionally strong performance and where performance offers the greatest opportunity for improvement. Linking quality to importance offers community members and leaders a view into the characteristics of the community that matter most and that seem to be working best.

Details that support these findings are contained in the remainder of this Livability Report, starting with the ratings for Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation and ending with results for Estes Park's unique questions.

Legend

- Higher than national benchmark
- Similar to national benchmark
- Lower than national benchmark

- ★ Most important



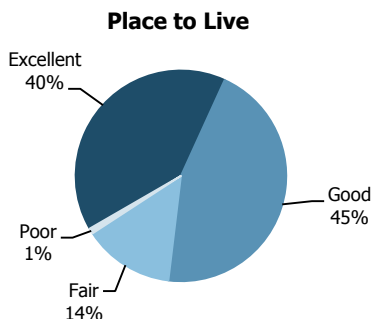
Community Characteristics

What makes a community livable, attractive and a place where people want to be?

Overall quality of community life represents the natural ambience, services and amenities that make for an attractive community. How residents rate their overall quality of life is an indicator of the overall health of a community. In the case of Estes Park, 85% rated the Town as an excellent or good place to live. Respondents' ratings of Estes Park as a place to live were similar to ratings in other communities across the nation.

In addition to rating the Town as a place to live, respondents rated several aspects of community quality including Estes Park as a place to raise children and to retire, their neighborhood as a place to live, the overall image or reputation of Estes Park and its overall appearance. At least 4 in 5 respondents gave excellent or good ratings to their neighborhoods, the overall image of Estes Park, Estes Park as a place to retire and to the overall appearance of the town. About 3 in 5 gave excellent or good ratings to Estes Park as a place to raise children. Ratings for Estes Park as a place to retire and its overall appearance were higher than in other communities across the nation.

Delving deeper into Community Characteristics, survey respondents rated over 40 features of the community within the eight facets of Community Livability. The highest rated facets were Safety and Natural Environment. Almost all respondents gave all facets of Safety and Natural Environment ratings of excellent or good. All aspects of Natural Environment were higher than the national benchmark comparisons. Ratings were mixed within other facets. Ratings for Mobility ranged from 29% to 77% excellent or good and tended to be similar to or lower than the benchmark comparison. Further, ratings decreased from 2011 to 2014 for several aspects of Mobility (see *Trends over Time* report under separate cover). Ratings for aspects of Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness and Education and Enrichment were also a mix of positive and negative. All aspects of Community Engagement were rated positively by a majority of respondents.



Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

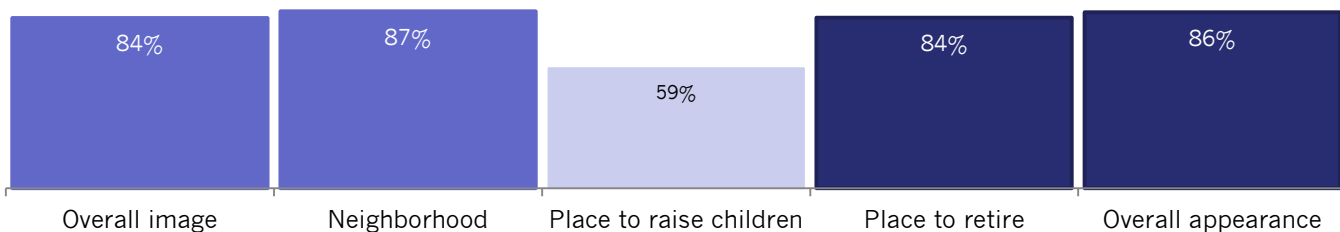
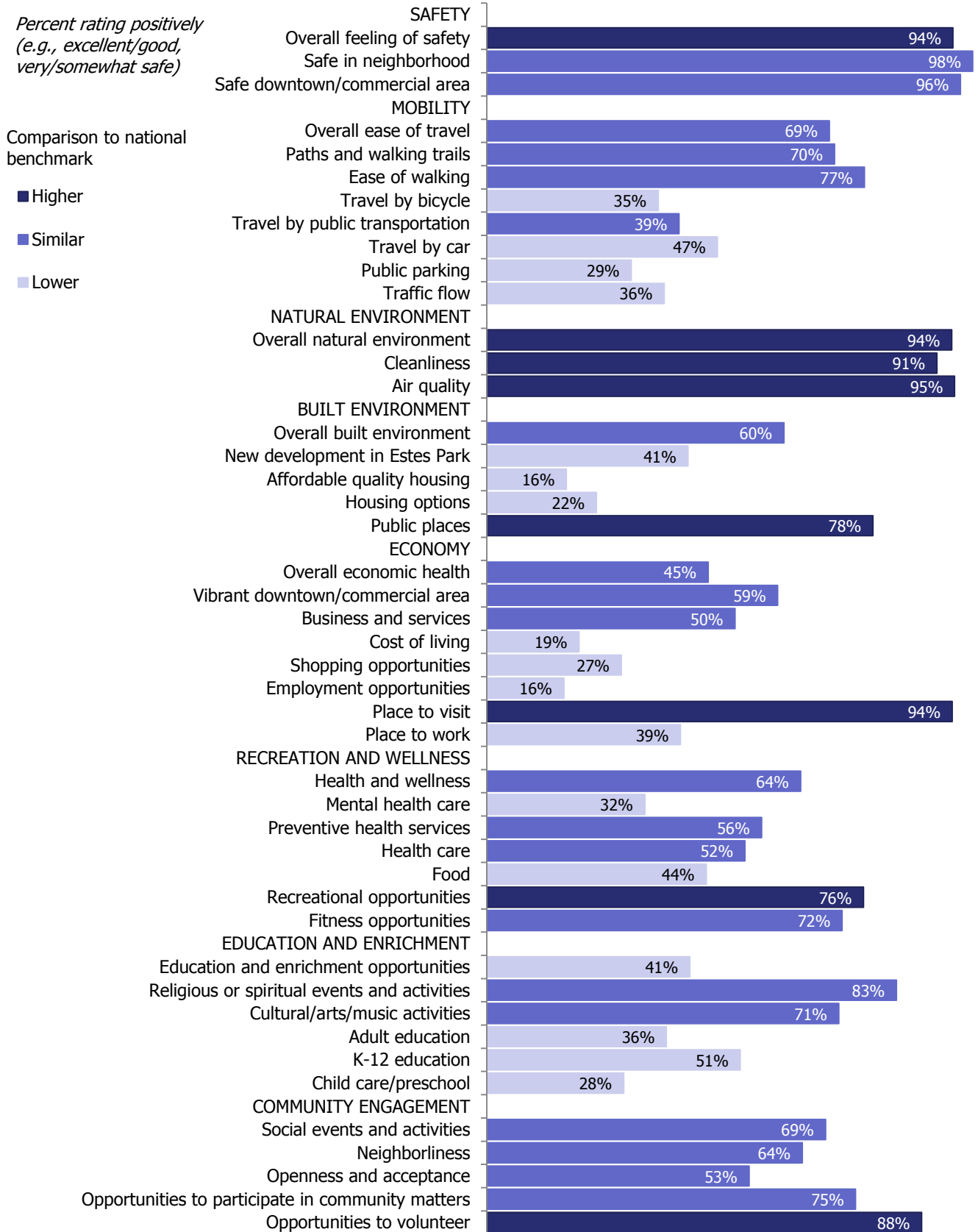


Figure 1: Aspects of Community Characteristics



Governance

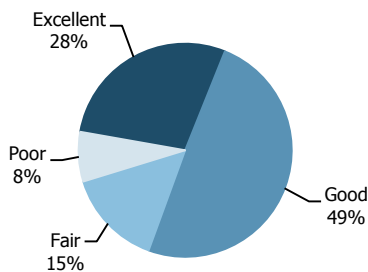
How well does the government of Estes Park meet the needs and expectations of its residents?

The overall quality of the services provided by Estes Park as well as the manner in which these services are provided are a key component of how residents rate their quality of life. The overall quality of Town services was rated as excellent or good by 77% of respondents; only 42% gave excellent or good ratings to the Federal Government.

Survey respondents also rated various aspects of Estes Park's overall leadership and governance. A majority gave positive ratings to these aspects, and these ratings were similar to the benchmark comparisons.

Respondents evaluated several individual services and amenities available in Estes Park. Most services rated similar to the benchmark or higher. Ratings for crime prevention, snow removal, drinking water power utility and utility billing were higher than in comparison communities. Ratings for street repair, land use, planning and zoning and recreation centers were lower than in comparison communities. Drinking water was the highest rated service, and street repair was the lowest.

Overall Quality of Town Services



Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

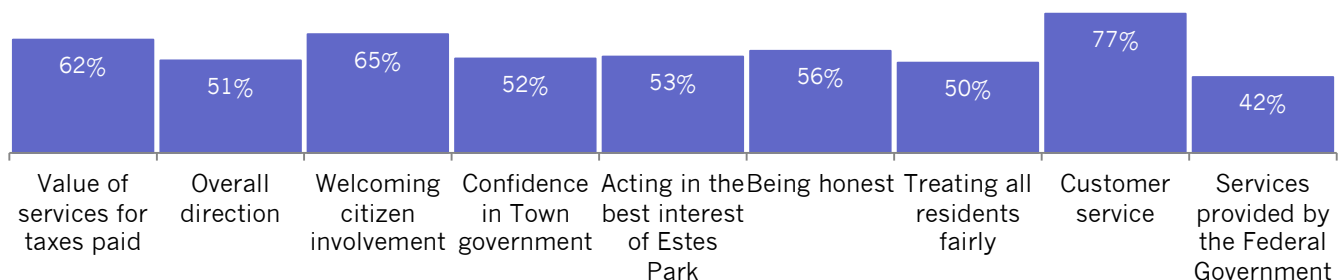
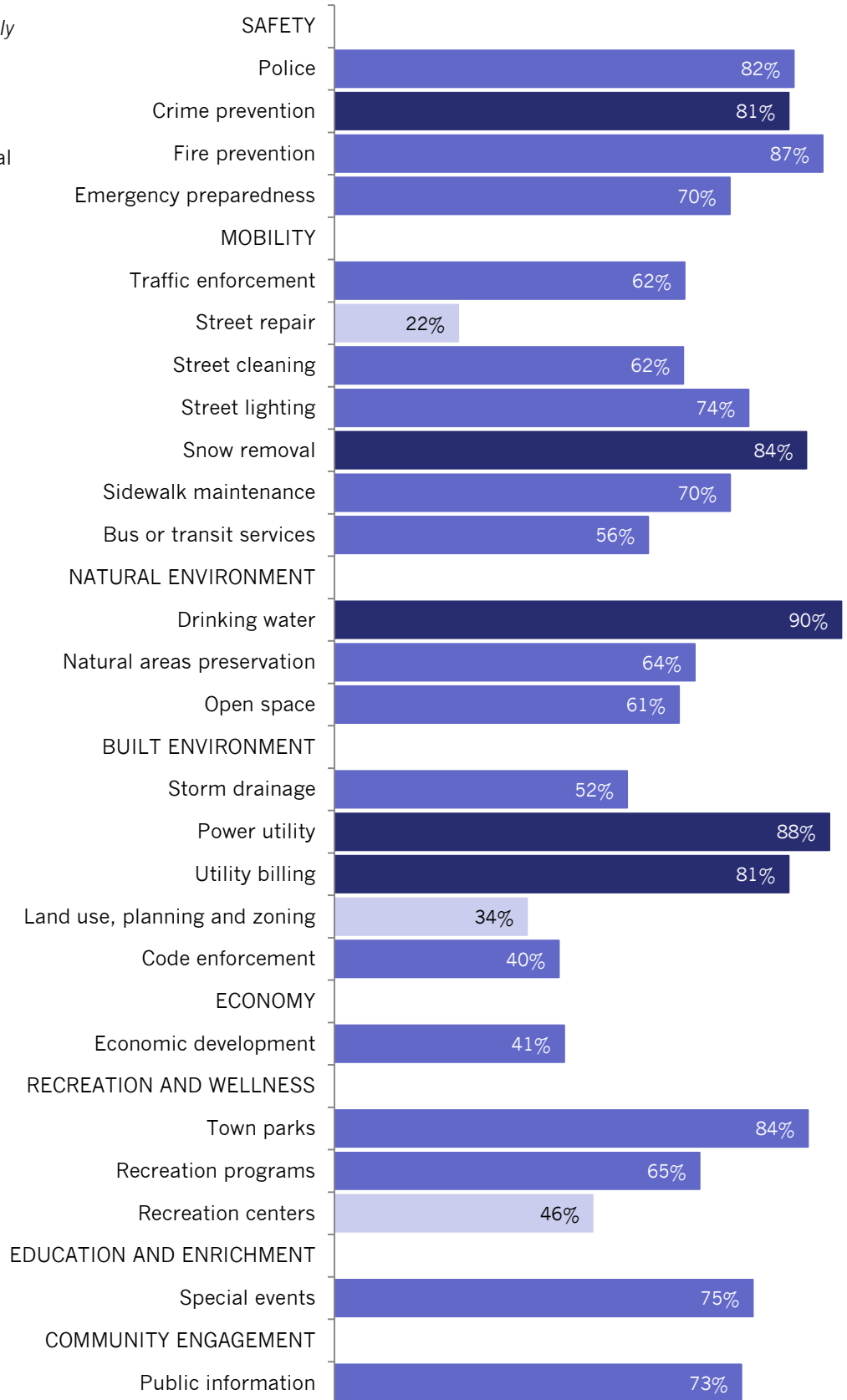


Figure 2: Aspects of Governance

Percent rating positively
(e.g., excellent/good)

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower

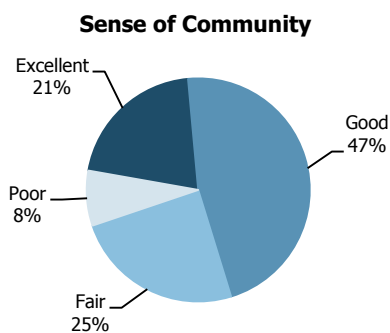


Participation

Are the residents of Estes Park connected to the community and each other?

An engaged community harnesses its most valuable resource, its residents. The connections and trust among residents, government, businesses and other organizations help to create a sense of community; a shared sense of membership, belonging and history. About 68% of respondents rated the sense of community as excellent or good, this rating remained stable over time and was similar to comparison communities. About half of survey respondents reported having contact with a Town employee in the last 12 months, which was similar to rates of contact in comparison communities. At least three-quarters of respondents would recommend living in Estes Park and planned to remain in Estes Park for the next five years.

The survey included over 30 activities and behaviors for which respondents indicated how often they participated in or performed each, if at all. All aspects of Participation were similar to or higher than the benchmark comparisons. These rates of participation tended to remain stable or increase from 2011 to 2014. A higher number of Estes Park residents than those in comparison communities reported having stocked supplies for an emergency, walked or biked instead of driving, worked in Estes Park, attended a Town-sponsored event, campaigned, volunteered, participated in a club, attended or watched a local public meeting and voted in local elections. At least 9 in 10 purchased goods or services in Estes Park, visited a Town park, talked to or visited with neighbors or had done a favor for a neighbor in the last 12 months.



Percent rating positively
(e.g., very/somewhat likely,
yes)

Comparison to national
benchmark

■ Higher ■ Similar ■ Lower

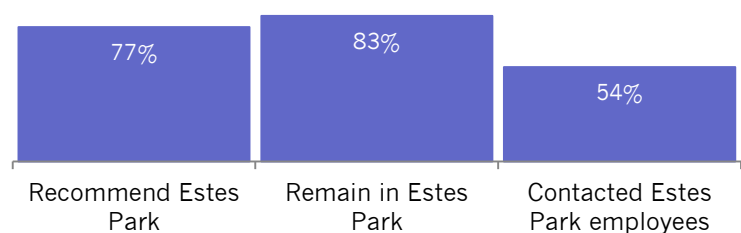
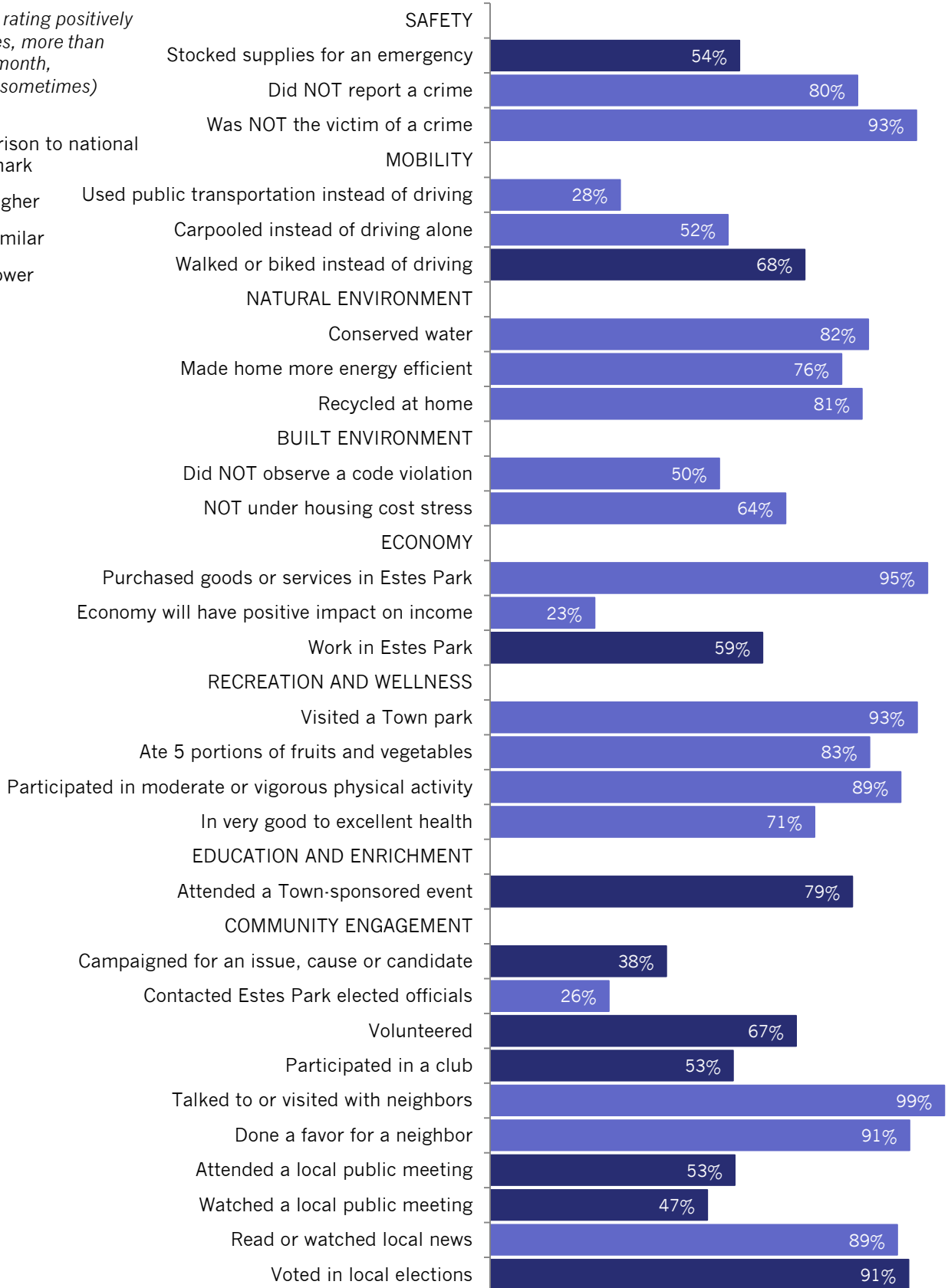


Figure 3: Aspects of Participation

Percent rating positively
(e.g., yes, more than
once a month,
always/sometimes)

Comparison to national
benchmark

- Higher
- Similar
- Lower



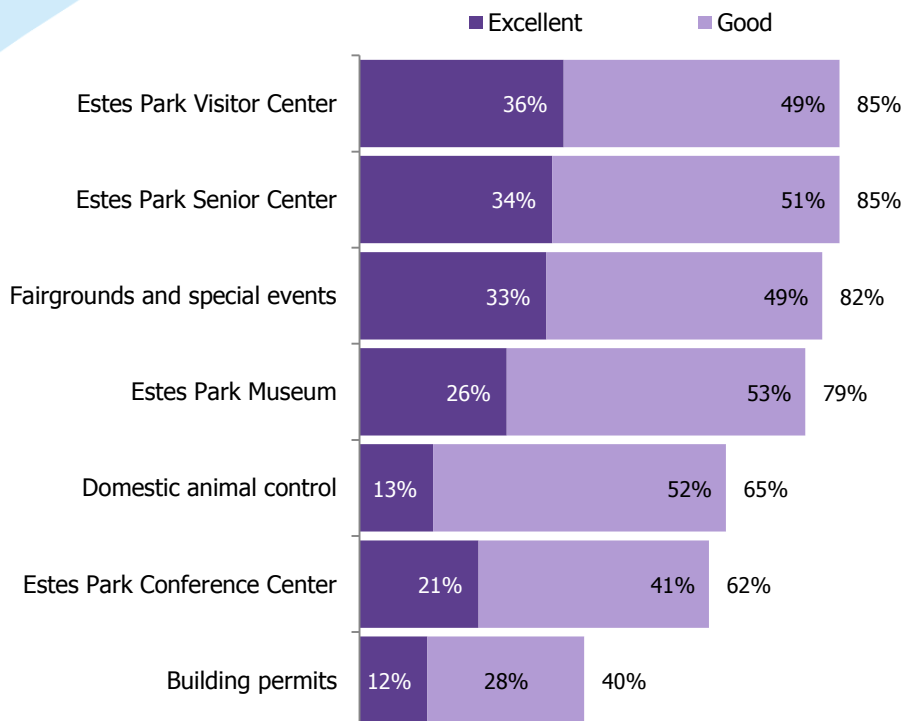
Special Topics

The Town of Estes Park included several questions of special interest on The NCS.

The first set of questions that were specific to Estes Park had to do with some specific services. Most services received excellent or ratings from a majority of respondents. The Estes Park Visitor Center and the Estes Park Senior Center received the highest ratings, while building permits received the lowest ratings.

Figure 4: Likelihood of Using Existing Methods to access Town Information

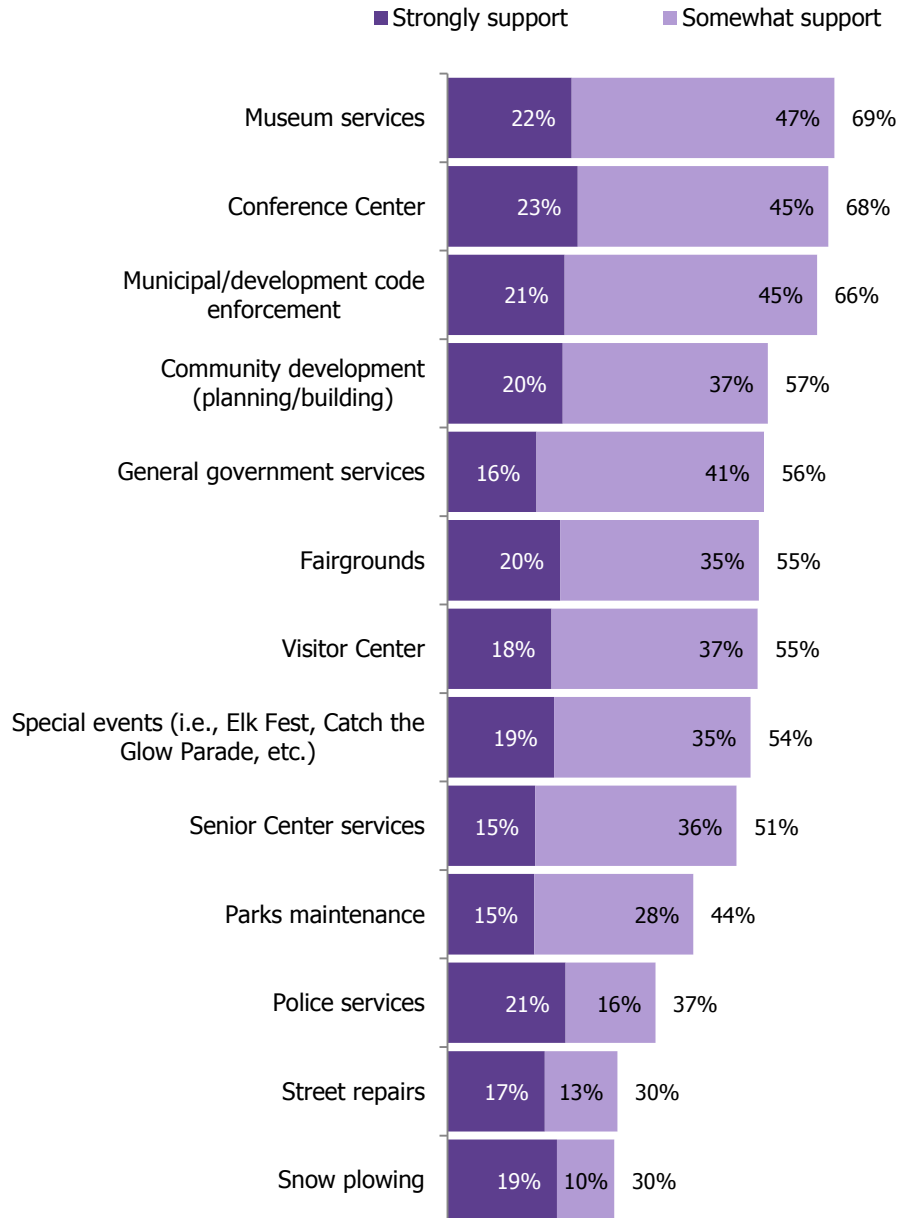
Please rate the quality of each of the following services in Estes Park:



The next special interest question asked residents their level of support or opposition to reduce specific Town services in the event of a budget shortfall. The services receiving the most support for potential reductions were museum services, the conference center, code enforcement, community development, general government services, the fairgrounds, the Visitor Center and special events. Only about 30% supported reducing service levels for street repairs or snow plowing.

Figure 5: Reduction of Town Services

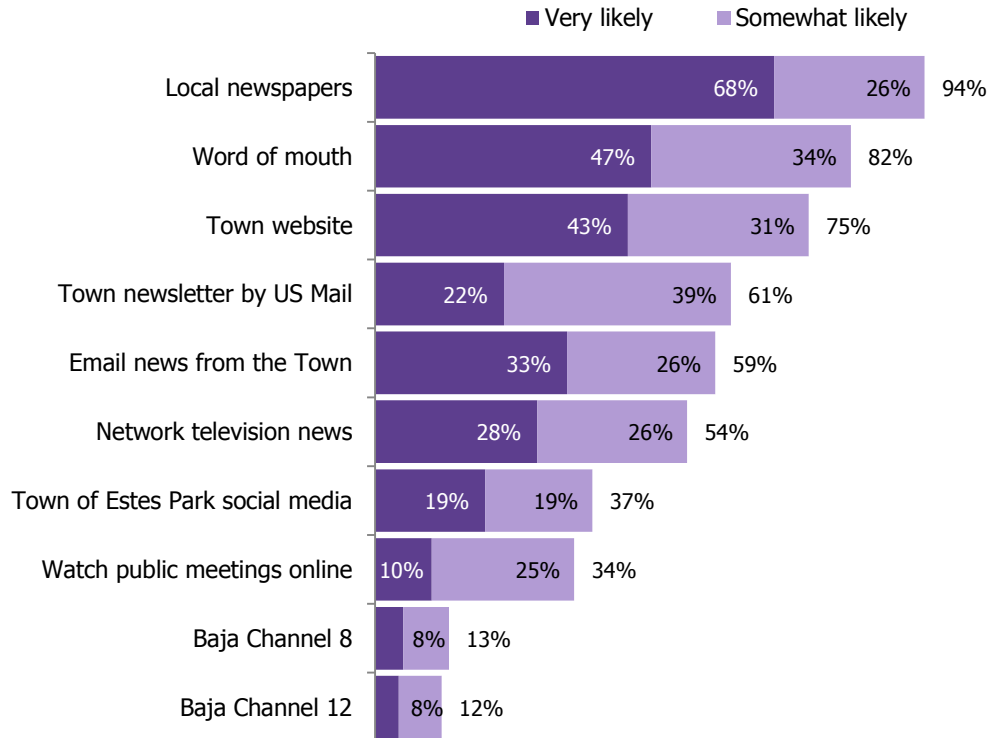
If a budget shortfall makes it necessary to reduce Town services to balance the budget, to what extent do you support or oppose reductions in the following Town services?



The next special interest question asked residents how likely or unlikely they were to use different types of existing methods to access Town information. Almost all said they were likely to use local newspapers. A majority of residents were also likely to use word of mouth, the Town website, the Town newsletter (via mail) and network television news. Residents were unlikely to watch Baja Channel 12 or 8, watch public meetings online or use Town of Estes Park social media.

Figure 6: Likelihood of Using Existing Methods to access Town Information

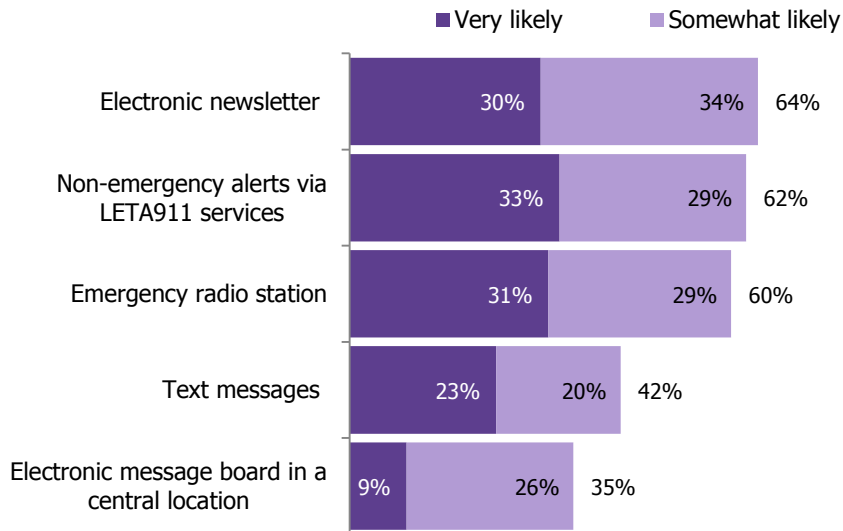
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to use each of the following existing methods to access Town information:



When asked how likely or unlikely they would be to use some potential methods to access Town information, a majority of residents were likely to use an electronic newsletter, non-emergency alerts via LETA911 services or an emergency radio station. They were less likely to use text messages from the Town or an electronic message board in a central location.

Figure 7: Likelihood of Using Potential Methods to access Town Information

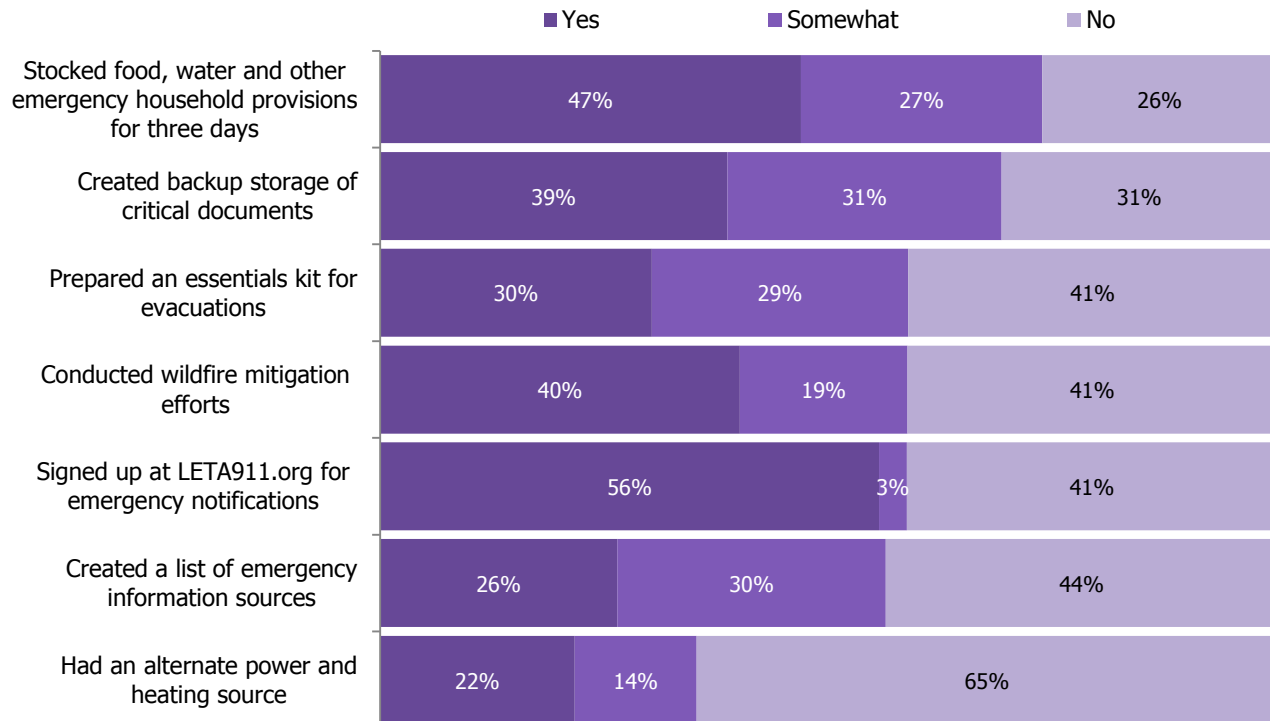
Please indicate how likely or unlikely you are to use each of the following potential methods to access Town information:



In the final special interest question, residents were asked if they had taken specific actions in the past 12 months to prepare for an emergency such as a wildfire or flood. A majority of residents responded “yes” or “somewhat” when asked if they had stocked food, water and other emergency provisions for three days, created back up storage of critical documents, prepared an essentials kit for evacuations, conducted wildfire mitigation efforts, signed up for emergency notifications and created a list of emergency information sources. Only about one-third of respondents indicated that they had an alternate power and heating source.

Figure 8: Household Emergency Preparedness

Please indicate if your household has done any of the following to prepare for an emergency such as a wildfire or flood in the last 12 months:



Conclusions

Estes Park residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

Four in five residents rated their overall quality of life as excellent or good and 77% of residents would be very or somewhat likely to recommend Estes Park as a place to live to someone who asks. Estes Park's overall appearance and overall image along with the Town as a place to live and retire received high ratings by at least four in five residents. Most of the aspects that contribute to community livability were rated positively and were at least similar to national benchmark comparisons. Most of these ratings had remained stable from 2011 to 2014.

The Economy is important to the community.

Residents believe that the economy is an important community feature to focus on over the next two years. Almost all residents gave excellent or good ratings for Estes Park as a place to visit, and this was higher than the national benchmark. More residents in 2014 than in 2011 thought the economy would have a positive impact on their incomes in the near future. Economic development services increased from 2011 to 2014, and were similar to the benchmark. However, ratings for Estes Park as a place to work and its employment opportunities, shopping opportunities and cost of living were lower than the benchmark comparisons.

Mobility is a key focus area.

Estes Park residents also identified Mobility as a key focus area. Several aspects of mobility were rated lower in 2014 when compared to 2011, including travel by car, travel by bicycle, ease of walking, paths and walking trails, traffic enforcement, street repair, street cleaning, street lighting and sidewalk maintenance.

Estes Park has an engaged community.

Across all three pillars, all aspects of Community Engagement were similar to or higher than in comparison communities. Further, all aspects within the pillar of Participation were at least similar to the benchmark. A higher number of Estes Park residents than those in comparison communities reported having stocked supplies for an emergency, walked or biked instead of driving, worked in Estes Park, attended a Town-sponsored event, campaigned, volunteered, participated in a club, attended or watched a local public meeting and voted in local elections. At least 9 in 10 purchased goods or services in Estes Park, visited a Town park, talked to or visited with neighbors or had done a favor for a neighbor in the last 12 months.